

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16).

1. Name of Property

historic name Bass-Morrell House other names/site number Bass, John, House; Morrell, Jacob, House.

2. Location

street & number Bryson Road (TN HWY 293) city, town Ardmore state Tennessee code 047 county Giles code TN055 zip code 38449

N/A not for publication X vicinity

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official Date State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

Entered in the National Register 11/10/88

6. Function or Use
 Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 DOMESTIC/ Single Dwelling

 Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
7. Description
 Architectural Classification
 (enter categories from instructions)

MID 19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD/Weatherboard

roof METAL/Tin

other WOOD/Weatherboard

BRICK

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bass-Morrell House is located in a rural farm area in the southeastern section of Giles County, Tennessee. The house was built on a hill overlooking the valleys of Indian Creek and the Elk River near the crossroads community of Bryson. Surrounding the house are cultivated fields, pastures and woodlands. Constructed ca. 1840, the house is a frame, two-story, central passage plan I-House with a rear two story ell. It retains many of its original exterior and interior detailing and additions to the house have been confined to the rear facade and rear ell. The house is oriented towards the north and faces state highway 273. No historic outbuildings survive and there are no other contributing structures on the site.

The Bass-Morrell House is a two-story frame, central passage plan I-House with Greek Revival influenced detailing. On the main (north) facade is a two-story gable front portico with four square columns and Doric design capitals. On the first story of the portico is an original railing with square balusters and a molded hand rail. On the second story is also an original railing of diagonal interlocking balusters which create a diamond pattern.

The main entrance has original single raised paneled double doors with original hardware and locks. Flanking the doors are Doric pilasters and sidelights. The sidelights have three lights and a single raised frame lower panel. Above the door and sidelights is a molded transom bar and an eight light transom. On the central bay of the second story is an identical entrance with single raised panel double doors with Doric pilasters, three light sidelights and an eight light transom.

Windows on the main facade are original 12/12 sash with frame sills. First story windows have label hood molding while windows on the second story lack this decoration. Many of the windows on the main facade retain their original pegged louvered shutters. The house has weatherboard siding and rests on a brick foundation. The foundation has several basement windows with original horizontal wood slats and added ca. 1960 single light windows which are placed behind the wood slats. At the roofline are wide (3') eaves with added ca. 1970

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vent openings. At the corners of the main facade are original Doric design pilasters. The gable roof is of ca. 1900 metal standing seam and the house has exterior end brick chimneys of irregular common bond.

On the west facade is a ca. 1930 one-story gable roof porch with square columns and a railing with square balusters. The porch encloses an original entrance of double doors with single light raised panels. Over the door is a molded transom bar, four light transom and architrave molding. The rear two-story frame ell is composed of an original two bay section and a one bay section added in 1973. Windows on the west facade of the original ell are original 12/12 sash with wooden shutters. The first story windows on this facade display label hood molding similar to the windows on the main facade. Windows in the added 1973 wing have 12/12 sash to match those on the main block of the house.

The south facade of the rear ell has 9/9 sash windows in the 1973 addition with windows on the first floor having matching label hood molding. On the east facade of the rear ell is a one-story frame addition also added in 1973 which replaced an original porch at this location. This addition has weatherboard siding, multi-light picture windows and multi-light frame doors. Attached to this addition is a carport with square posts and a screened in porch with square columns and frame railing. A small brick chimney was also built in this addition. Attached to the rear of the main block of the house are small ca. 1900 shed roof frame additions with brick foundations.

The interior of the house was designed in a central hall plan and retains original plaster walls, poplar floors and with the main staircase located in the central hall. This staircase has a tapered square newel post, square tapered balusters and a round handrail. The stair apron has horizontal paneling. Flanking the central hall on the first story are two rooms with different decoration. The east room has a plain door surround and the door is of two panel raised design. In the west room the doors are of five panel raised design and have elaborate fluted surrounds with undecorated corner blocks. This more elaborate decoration is continued in the dining room in the rear ell. Tradition states that the west room and dining area were formal areas for entertaining and therefore received more elaborate woodwork. Fluted door surrounds are also continued on the second floor rooms.

Mantles throughout the house are of Greek Revival influence with plain lintels and Doric motif pilasters. A second stairway is located in the hallway separating the west room and dining room in the rear ell. This stairway is similar in design to the main staircase in the central hall with a tapered square newel post, tapered square balusters and a paneled apron. In the dining room is

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rectangular paneled wainscoting but it is unknown if this is an original feature or a later addition. Beneath the main block of the house is an original basement with exposed brick walls, fireplace opening and mantle along the east wall. This mantle is similar in design to others in the house and may have served as the primary kitchen for the house. The original brick floor in the basement has been replaced with modern stone and concrete. Leading to the basement is an original frame staircase.

All outbuildings from the 19th and early 20th century have been razed and no other contributing structures are located on the site. To the east of the house are ca. 1940 frame garages but these are not included within the nominated property's boundary. The house is sited facing Bryson Road (State Route # 273) and the walkway leading from the front door to the road is lined with boxwoods. There are no other significant site features.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

Ca. 1840

1878-1905

Significant Dates

Ca. 1840

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Morrell, Jacob

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Bass-Morrell House is significant under criterion B and C for its association with prominent businessman and miller Jacob Morrell and as a notable example of a mid-19th century central passage plan I-House with Greek Revival detailing. Under criterion B, the property is significant from 1878 to 1905 when it was owned by Jacob Morrell. When Morrell purchased the house he was well known in Giles County for his milling interests. In 1878, he owned the Elk River Grist Mills, cotton gins and two steam powered lumber and saw mills. He was profiled in the 1887 Goodspeed Biographical Index of Giles County which listed him as one of the county's leading citizens. Morrell continued his milling interests until his death in 1905 and the house is the only property identified in Giles County with associations with Elk River millers of the 19th century. The house is also significant under criterion C as notable example of a central passage plan I-House from the mid-19th century. Constructed ca. 1840, the house displays a prominent two-story Doric portico on the main facade with square, Doric design columns. Most of the exterior and interior features are original and alterations have taken place primarily at the rear of the house. The Bass-Morrell House is a notable example of this house form in southern Middle Tennessee.

The Bass-Morrell House was constructed ca. 1840 on land owned by John Bass. Bass was born in Robeson County, North Carolina in 1795 and moved with his family to Tennessee in the 1820s. Bass met and married Temperence Sumner in Davidson County and they were married on January 13, 1831. Within the next year, the Bass family settled in Giles County on a large tract of land north of the Elk River. Bass and his family soon became prominent farmers in this section of the county which is composed of rich farmland along the valley of the Elk River. Tradition states that Bass built this two-story frame residence around 1845 and its interior and exterior detailing reinforce this attributed date.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Slater, Margaret. "Architectural/Historical Assessment State Route 273 Bridge Replacement, Indian Creek (L.M. 12.91), Giles County". December, 1986

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 3.4 acres

UTM References

A

1	1	6	5	1	2	3	1	5	3	8	8	2	6	9	5
Zone			Easting			Northing									

B

Zone			Easting			Northing									

C

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D

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Dellrose 66SE

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Philip Thomason
organization Thomason and Assoc. date 6/3/88
street & number P.O. Box 121225 telephone (615) 383-0227
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The house constructed for Bass was a large two-story frame residence with Greek Revival detailing. The house was built with a two-story portico with square columns and Doric motif capitals and the main entrances display sidelights, transoms and surrounds typical of the Greek Revival period. The interior was also built with fluted woodwork and mantles displaying Greek Revival detailing. No record exists of the builder of the house. Bass sited his residence on a hill overlooking the valleys of the Elk River and Indian Creek.

The Bass family were early members of the Bethany Church and around 1848 they donated part of their land for the construction of a new church building and a school. In 1850, Bass owned a farm of 650 acres valued at \$20,000. He was described in one account as a merchant of "the highest integrity, popular and successful in business". On May 19, 1860, he died at the age of 66 from pneumonia leaving an estate of 730 acres and 42 slaves. Upon his death his real estate was valued at \$26,250 and personal property was valued at \$48,773. Unfortunately, John Bass died intestate and the next several years brought hardship and tragedy to his widow and nine children. A son, James P. Bass died at the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou in 1862 while serving with the Third Tennessee infantry, and a daughter, 15 year old Medora, died of illness in the same year. A suit was filed among the heirs of Bass in 1866 and after a lengthy court battle the ownership of the "mansion house" passed to Mildred and Thomas G. Jones, Bass's oldest daughter and her husband. Temperence Bass eventually moved to Louisiana where she died in 1899.

Jones and his wife owned the property for twelve years before selling the house and 113 acres to Jacob B. Morrell in 1878. Born in East Tennessee in 1820, Morrell moved to Giles County in 1842 and married Eleanor Phelps. By the time he purchased the house Morrell was already well known for his farming and milling interests in the county. By the late 1870s he was operating the Elk River Grist Mills located near the mouth of Indian Creek in the eastern section of the county. This mill was built around 1861 by Early Benson and was a well known and prominent mill prior to its purchase by Morrell. Morrell purchased the former Bass residence possibly because of its immediate location to his milling operations along Indian Creek.

The Elk River Grist Mills was one of the county's most prominent mills in the late 19th century in Giles County. The Elk River runs through the southeastern section of the county and is the only prominent stream with the capacity for large milling operations. Accounts from the 19th century describe dozens of water powered mills in the county along its creeks. However, most of these were small mills with seasonal operation or also relied upon horse power and steam engines. The Elk River was the only constant flowing stream which could support a large mill complex. Morrell's acquisition of the Elk River Mills in the

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1870s reflects his prominence as a miller and he soon enlarged the milling operation. The only other major mill on the Elk River was the M.B. McAllister mill and no properties associated with this milling operation have been identified.

Morrell's mill was described in the 1880 Manufacturers Census as one of the most productive in the county. The main mill was located adjacent to the river with a rock mill dam channeling river water into a race. The race emptied into a turbine pit which turned the turbine wheel and powered the mill machinery. The mill operated 11 months of the year and had two employees with a maximum capacity of 400 bushels per day. Nearby were lumber and saw mills operated by steam power with a total on nine employees. Together the saw mills produced a half million board feet of lumber each year.

In addition to this mill, Morrell also owned cotton gins, two steam-powered lumber and saw mills - one in partnership with his brother, Samuel. In 1887, Morrell was profiled in the Goodspeed Biographical Index which listed him as one of the most prominent residents of the county. He was listed as a farmer and miller, owning 270 acres in the county along with the Elk River Grist Mills and other milling interests. His residence and mills are illustrated on the 1878 Beers map of the county.

Only four years after the purchase of the house, Eleanor Morrell died on July 6, 1882 at the age of 58. Morrell continued to live at the residence with several of his children for the next several decades as he continued his farming and milling interests. In 1900, Morrell is listed as 70 years of age, living alone. Morrell lived to age 75, dying on December 18, 1905. Like Bass, Morrell also died intestate and a court battle followed with the house passing from the hands of the Morrell family. Owners of the house in the 20th century include Erskine Stevenson, Herbert K. Stevenson, Herman Watson and the current owners, Dr. J.D. and Nancy Turner. The mill on Indian Creek was sold following Morrell's death and continued to operate under the partnership of T.M. Stevenson and E. E. Eslick until it closed in the 1920s. In these years the mill operated under the name of the Elkton Grain and Milling Company. The mill was later razed and only foundations of the mill remain. Morrell's Mill continues to be a place name on Giles County maps.

The period of significance for the Bass-Morrell House under criterion C is ca. 1840 which is derived from the structure's traditional date of construction. The house is notable as one of the largest frame Greek Revival influenced structures in Giles County. While over a dozen other two-story frame residences with similar detailing exist from this period in the county, the Bass-Morrell House is the only residence which displays such a large two-story original rear

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ell. Other Greek Revival influenced frame residences listed on the National Register in Giles County are generally smaller one-story structures such as the George W. Tillery House and Newton White House. The Bass-Morrell House has not been significantly altered with additions confined to the rear facade.

The period of significance for the Bass-Morrell House under criterion B is from 1878 to 1905, the dates of ownership by Jacob Morrell during his operation of the nearby Elk River Grist Mills. The mill was one of the few major milling operations located on the river in the county and under Morrell's ownership it became one of the best known. Accounts of Morrell describe him as one of the county's most prominent millers in the late 19th century. Morrell continued to own and operate the mill until his death in 1905 and it is the only building identified associated with Elk River milling operations of the 19th century.

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Bibliography

1850 Agricultural Census, District 9, Giles County, Tennessee.

1860 Census, District 9, Giles County, Tennessee.

1880 Manufacturers Census, District 9, Giles County, Tennessee.

Giles County Deed Records and Minute Books, 1817 - 1983, Giles County Courthouse, Pulaski, Tennessee.

Giles County Historical Society. Cemetery Records of Giles County. Private Printing: Pulaski, Tennessee, 1986.

Goodspeed's History of Tennessee. Nashville, Tennessee: 1887.

McCallum, James. Early History of Giles County. Private Printing, 1876.

Nashville Republican Banner, January 15, 1831.

Newman, M.T. Bethany Presbyterian Church, Historic Sketches of Famous Old Institutions: Private Printing, 1926.

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Bass-Morrell House - Giles County, TN

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Bass-Morrell House is shown on the accompanying Giles County tax map and is illustrated by a dotted line. The map is drawn at 1" = 400'. The property is bounded on the north by the southern edge of Bryson Road (State Highway 273) and extends 300'; on the east and south by the western edge of a gravel driveway and extends 500'; and on the south and west by a wire fence line which extends 340'.

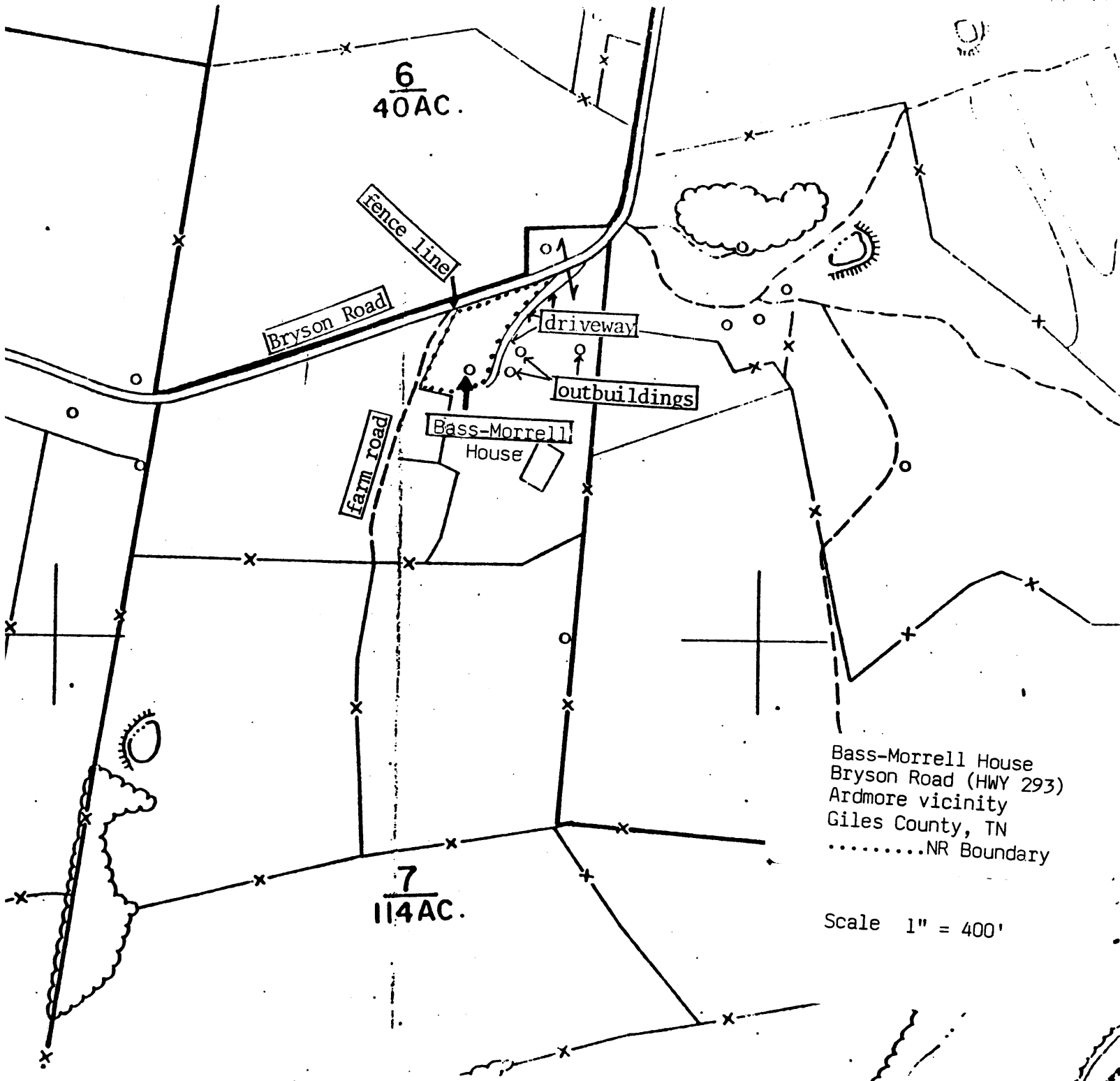
Boundary Justification

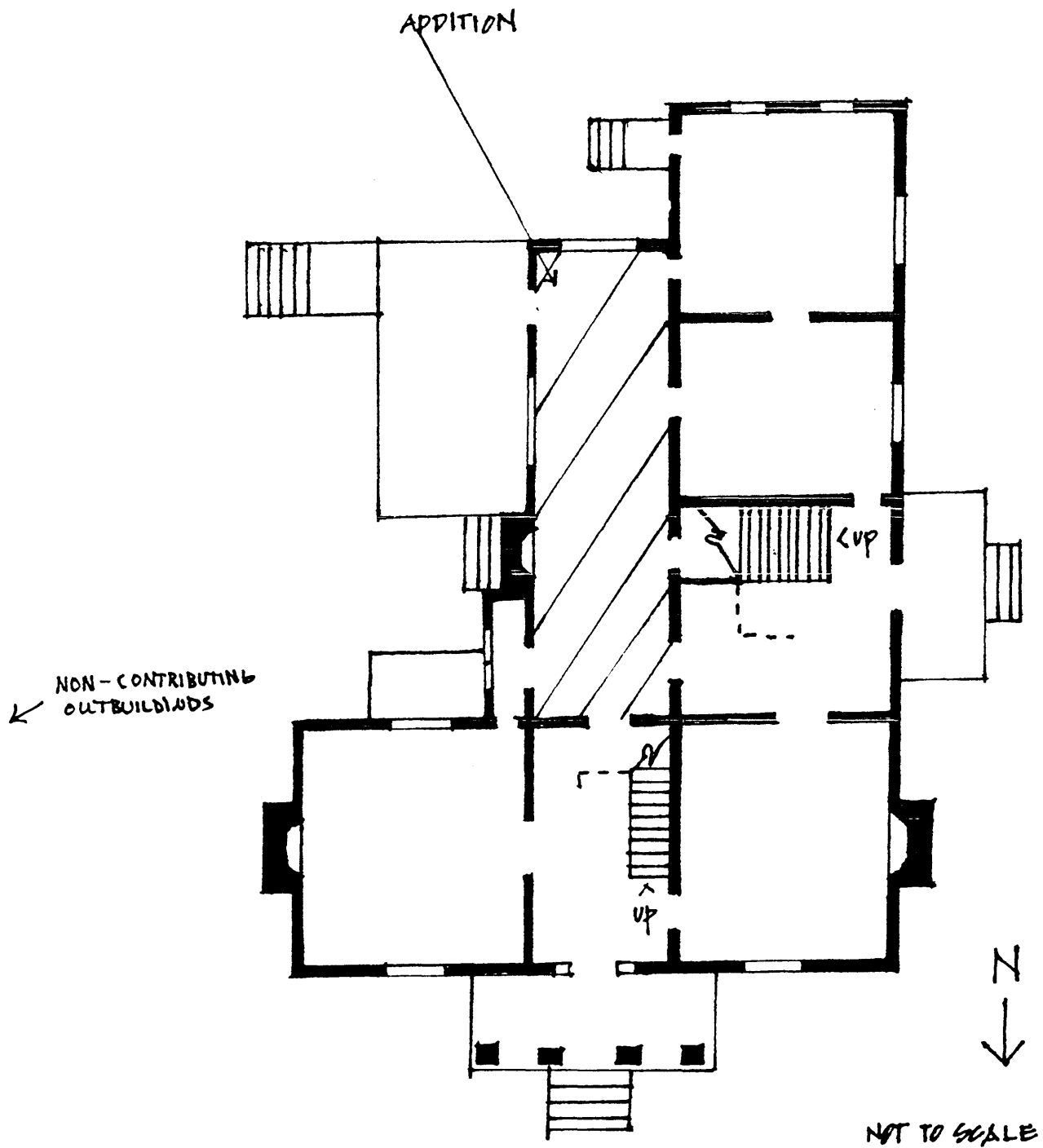
The boundary for the Bass-Morrell House is drawn to include the residence and exclude modern outbuildings to the east and south. No other historic building or structure remains on the site and the boundary includes sufficient property to protect the integrity of the site.

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Bass-Morrell House, Giles County, TN

Bass-Morrell House - Giles County, Tennessee
Photo Key

All photographs by Thomason and Associates, Nashville, Tennessee.
Photographs taken April 7, 1988.
Negatives on file at the Tennessee Historical Commission, 701 Broad, Nashville,
Tennessee.

- Photo # 1 - North facade, view towards southwest.
- Photo # 2 - North facade, detail of portico, view towards south.
- Photo # 3 - North facade, detail of main entrance, view towards south.
- Photo # 4 - North and east facades, view towards southeast.
- Photo # 5 - West facade, view towards northeast.
- Photo # 6 - South facade, view towards north.
- Photo # 7 - South and east facade, view towards northeast.
- Photo # 8 - Detail of original mantle in first floor parlor.
- Photo # 9 - Detail of original raised panel doors on first story.
- Photo # 10 - Detail of original staircase on first story.
- Photo # 11 - Detail of original door and fluted surround on first story.
- Photo # 12 - Non-contributing outbuildings, view towards southeast.

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The State code for Tennessee was listed as "047". It should be "TN".

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ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Keeper

Albous Byers 4/12/89